

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO
PETE V. DOMENICI UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
333 LOMAS BLVD, N.W., SUITE 660
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87102
TELEPHONE: (505) 348-2280
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JAMES O. BROWNING
District Judge

December 31, 2024

VIA CM/ECF

Sean Long
United States Attorney's Office
1205 Texas Ave.
Lubbock, TX 79401

Robert Cooper
1011 Lomas Blvd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Re: United States of America v. Kyle Linker, No. CR 24-1312 JB

Dear Counsel of Record:

I want to bring one matter to your attention. I have, with my law clerks, reviewed the Judicial Code of Conduct and do not believe this matter requires me to recuse myself. I want, however, everyone to be fully informed about, and fully comfortable with, my participation in the case.

I see that one of the letters on behalf of Defendant Kyle Linker is from Rick Hankins. My memory is that, when Rick Hankins first moved to Albuquerque, he first came to Montgomery Blvd Church of Christ, where I have attended for forty-one years. Mr. Hankins was young and wanted to be involved in youth activities. Montgomery was slow to involve him.

Mr. Hankins moved over to Mountainside Church of Christ, where he was a successful youth minister. He later was elevated to the pulpit, senior minister. My wife and Mr. Hankins studied together for a master's degree in ministry from Pepperdine University. When my wife died in 2019, Montgomery had sold its building, was meeting in an APS facility, and building a new building. I called Mr. Hankins about using his building for the funeral, and he graciously agreed to allow me to use it. I ended up using Netherwood Church of Christ because its auditorium is bigger, but I always have appreciated Mr. Hankins and Mountainside's willingness to help in my time of need.

I believe that I can be fair and impartial. I see no reason to recuse myself. If anyone objects, or has any questions, we can perhaps have a conference. Please call my Courtroom Deputy Clerk, Lauren Rotonda (505-348-2289). I have instructed Ms. Rotonda not to tell me who may call.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James O. Browning". The signature is stylized with a large, loopy initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline that extends below the printed name.

James O. Browning
United States District Judge